

CLAIM SET AS AMENDED

1. (Original) A vehicle rear structure, comprising:

a vehicle body having an opening at a rear portion of said vehicle;
an upper door and a lower door for closing said rear opening; and
a damper mechanism placed between an outer panel and an inner panel constituting a wall of said vehicle body and attached to at least said lower door for slowing opening and closing movements of said lower door.

2. (Previously Presented) The rear structure as set forth in claim 1, wherein said damper mechanism comprises:

a hinge support provided within said wall in the vicinity of a lower edge portion of said rear opening;
a hinge shaft rotatably mounted to said hinge support, said hinge shaft having a distal end extending from said wall toward the vehicle transverse center to be mounted to a lower portion of said lower door;
a hinge arm extending from said hinge shaft radially of said hinge shaft; and
a damper stay having a first end and a second end, said first end being connected to a distal end said hinge arm in a vertically swingable fashion, said second end being connected to a stay support within said wall in a vertically swingable fashion.

3. (Currently Amended) The rear structure as set forth in claim 1, wherein said damper mechanism comprising:

a hinge support provided within said wall in the vicinity of a lower edge portion of said rear opening;

a hinge shaft rotatably mounted to said hinge support, said hinge shaft having a distal end extending from said wall toward the vehicle transverse center to be mounted to a lower portion of said lower door;

a hinge arm extending from said hinge shaft radially of said hinge shaft;

a first link having a first end connected to a distal end of said hinge arm in a vertically swingable manner;

a second link having a first end connected to a second end of said first link in a vertically swingable manner;

a link support provided within said wall for mounting a central portion of said second link thereto so that said second link is vertically swingable about said central portion;

a damper stay having a first end connected to a second end (66e) of said second link in a vertically swingable fashion; and

a stay support provided within said wall to which a second end of said damper stay is connected in a vertically swingable fashion.

4. (Previously Presented) The rear structure according to claim 3, wherein said hinge arm and said second link are arranged substantially parallel with respect to each other.

5. (Previously Presented) The rear structure according to claim 2, wherein the hinge shaft extends a predetermined distance from the hinge support for mounting the damper stay and the hinge arm to be out of interference with vehicle body components.

6. (Previously Presented) The rear structure according to claim 3, wherein the hinge shaft extends a predetermined distance from the hinge support for mounting the damper stay and the hinge arm to be out of interference with vehicle body components.

7. (Currently Amended) The rear structure according to claim 2, wherein said hinge shaft has a non-circular shape for mating with a non-circular shape aperture in the lower door and further including a set screw for preventing axial movement of the hinge shaft.

8. (Currently Amended) The rear structure according to claim 3, wherein said hinge shaft has a non-circular shape for mating with a non-circular shape aperture in the lower door and further including a set screw for preventing axial movement of the hinge shaft.

9. (Currently Amended) A damper mechanism for use with a vehicle comprising:
a hinge arm including a distal end and a proximal end, said proximal end being
~~adapted for mounting relative~~ mounted to a lower door designed for closing a portion of a
rear opening of a vehicle;

a damper including a first end and a second end, said first end being adapted for mounting relative to mounted on a vehicle wall adjacent to a rear opening of a vehicle in a position above said second end, and [[a]] said second end being secured to said distal end of said hinge arm;

wherein said damper slows the opening and closing movements of said lower door.

10. (Currently Amended) The damper mechanism for use with [[a]] said vehicle as set forth in claim [[1]] 9, and further including:

a hinge support provided within said wall in the vicinity of a lower edge portion of [[a]] the rear opening;
a hinge shaft being rotatably mounted to said hinge support;
said hinge arm extending from said hinge shaft radially of said hinge shaft; and
said damper being connected to the distal end of said hinge arm in a vertically swingable fashion, said second end being connected to a stay support within a wall in a vertically swingable fashion.

11. (Currently Amended) The damper mechanism for use with [[a]] said vehicle as set forth in claim [[1]] 9, and further including:

a hinge support provided within said wall in the vicinity of a lower edge portion of [[a]] said rear opening;
a hinge shaft being rotatably mounted to said hinge support;

said hinge arm extending from said hinge shaft radially of said hinge shaft;
 a first link having a first end connected to the distal end of said hinge arm in a
 vertically swingable manner;
 a second link having a first end connected to a second end of said first link in a
 vertically swingable manner;
 a link support provided within said wall for mounting a central portion of said second
 link thereto so that said second link is vertically swingable about said central portion;
 a damper stay having a first end connected to a second end of said second link in a
 vertically swingable fashion; and
 a stay support provided within [[a]] the wall to which a second end of said damper
 stay is connected in a vertically swingable fashion.

12. (Currently Amended) The damper mechanism for use with [[a]] said vehicle
according to claim 11, wherein said hinge arm and said second link are arranged
substantially parallel with respect to each other.

13. (Currently Amended) The damper mechanism for use with [[a]] said vehicle
according to claim 10, wherein the hinge shaft extends a predetermined distance from the
hinge support for mounting the damper stay and the hinge arm to be out of interference with
vehicle body components.

14. (Currently Amended) The damper mechanism for use with [[a]] said vehicle according to claim 11, wherein the hinge shaft extends a predetermined distance from the hinge support for mounting the damper stay and the hinge arm to be out of interference with vehicle body components.

15. (Currently Amended) The damper mechanism for use with [[a]] said vehicle according to claim 10, wherein said hinge shaft has a non-circular shape for mating with a non-circular shape aperture in the lower door and further including a set screw for preventing axial movement of the hinge shaft.

16. (Currently Amended) The damper mechanism for use with [[a]] said vehicle according to claim 11, wherein said hinge shaft has a non-circular shape for mating with a non-circular shape aperture in the lower door and further including a set screw for preventing axial movement of the hinge shaft.

17. (New) The damper mechanism for use with said vehicle according to claim 3, wherein an operation to open said lower door causes said second end of the damper stay to extend in a downward direction.

18. (New) The damper mechanism for use with said vehicle according to claim 2, wherein an operation to open said lower door causes said second end of the damper stay to move in an upward direction.

19. (New) The damper mechanism for use with said vehicle according to claim 9, wherein an operation to open said lower door causes said second end of the damper to extend in a downward direction.

20. (New) The damper mechanism for use with said vehicle according to claim 9, wherein an operation to open said lower door causes said second end of the damper to move in an upward direction.